

Senator Toni Harp and Representative Toni Walker, Co-Chairs and the Joint  
Appropriations Committee Members:  
February 15, 2012

Line-item State Appropriation for National Theatre of the Deaf (NTD)

I am Sue Pedersen, one of the deaf supporters of NTD. My husband and I were astonished when we read that Governor Malloy proposed to give no funding to National Theatre of the Deaf (NTD). We cannot believe because NTD, a well-respected non-profit theater does not deserve that kind of funding cut.

NTD provides entertainment to the community as well as the nation with its outstanding performances. Recently NTD did the performance at Old State House in Hartford, CT, and also did the rehearsal opening to the public at the Eugene O' Neill Theatre at Waterford, CT. It gave the consultation to the theater at Ivyton, CT on the performance about Helen Keller. Jenilee Simons-Marques, Deaf student of American School for the Deaf acting as Helen won the award for its unique visual art. NTD is very proud of its outstanding contribution to any public theaters.

Deaf community is very saddened that Charles "Chuck" Baird, one of the best deaf NTD actors, passed away last Friday. His outstanding performance in the "King of Hearts" was very unique with his talents of acting and artwork.

In addition NTD creates many jobs for deaf and hearing actors and actresses as well as the technical staff. These who are involved in the NTD help promote awareness and better understanding of people with disabilities and different communication modes through sign language among the school students across the state and country.

Last July Governor Malloy signed the American Sign Language (ASL) as World Language into a state law. Some high schools are currently offering ASL courses to any students who are interested in taking it as one of the foreign languages. NTD would be more than expertise to assist in doing more ASL-related enrichment or entertainment for these high school students who may like to think of developing their career plans such as sign language interpreters, social workers, and teachers of any children with autism, other disabilities, special needs and language challenges.

Please oppose Governor Malloy's proposal of cutting the NTD budget. Thank you.